

This Week in Congress

November 22, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." As we approach Thanksgiving, Robba and I are mindful of all we have to be thankful for. We are especially grateful for the dedicated men and women of the armed forces who are away from their families this holiday season to defend and protect our freedoms. Our prayers and thoughts are with them and their families this week and throughout the year.

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Changing “Business as Usual” in Washington

This week, I returned to Washington for the “lame duck” session of Congress, and participated in orientation sessions as Senator-elect. On Tuesday, I voted with members of the U.S. Senate Republican Conference to enact a two-year ban on earmarks. Earlier this year in the House of Representatives, I helped lead the movement to ban earmarks because I believe that without reform, earmarks can encourage a culture of waste and leave room for corruption in the federal budgeting process. In the Senate Republican Conference, we also adopted resolutions this week to reduce federal debt and government spending. Kansans expect government to spend less and spend wiser and these steps will help change the way Washington does business. [Click here](#) to read more about the approved the earmark ban and resolutions.

When members of Congress return to Washington after the Thanksgiving holiday, I anticipate the focus in Congress will be on the extension of the current tax rates. Unless Congress acts before the end of the year, taxes will increase for all Americans, many of whom run small businesses and employ American workers. To put people back to work, Congress must lower the tax and regulatory burden so businesses can grow and create jobs. This potential tax hike will only further damage our economy, so I will continue to fight against higher taxes.

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Discussing NBAF Report with DHS and USDA

Progress continued this week on the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) to be built in Manhattan to protect our nation's agriculture sector and food supply. Following the recent release of a risk assessment of the new research lab by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the National Research Council (NRC) issued an evaluation of DHS's report on Monday. The NRC's study confirmed the need for NBAF's critical research mission, and the recommendations are helpful as DHS continues its design phase of the facility. Some of NRC's findings did not take into account the risk mitigation and safety plans that DHS will incorporate into the facility.

I joined members of the Kansas congressional delegation on Wednesday in meeting with leaders of DHS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture as we work to ensure NBAF moves forward as a modern, safe, world-class research laboratory to protect our nation's food supply.

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Preserving Kansans' Access to Health Services

The federal agency that administers the Medicare program, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), recently announced that proposed changes to physician supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services would be delayed for one year until a better solution can be reached. This delay will prevent a disruption of critical services for patients in Kansas and across the country.

Earlier this year, CMS announced that hospitals would need to adhere to a new policy, requiring a physician to be present for the delivery of outpatient therapeutic services, such as drug and blood infusions, pulmonary rehabilitation services, and psychiatric services. These services are currently performed by non-physician practitioners, subject to a physician's guidelines.

I led efforts to oppose these changes because they are unrealistic for Kansas hospitals that routinely face physician shortages and would have forced them to eliminate services to patients. Delaying enforcement of this policy will give rural health advocates time to continue working with CMS to find a commonsense solution to preserve both patient safety and access to important therapy services.

On September 17th, I authored a bipartisan letter, signed by 67 Members of Congress, that asked CMS to re-evaluate the proposal. Additionally, on September 29th, I sponsored H.R. 6376, legislation that would preserve patients' access to outpatient therapeutic services. This matter will continue to be a priority for me and other members of the House Rural Health Care Coalition that I chair. [Click here](#) to read more about these issues and [click here](#) to read more about H.R. 6376.

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Selection Board Interviews Applicants for U.S. Service Academies

The 2010 First District Service Academy Selection Board met this weekend at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene to interview students applying for admission to the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Meeting with these bright young men and women who are seeking to become leaders in our military, is one of my favorite responsibilities as a Member of Congress.

This important process would not be possible without the help of my selection board, made up of community leaders from across the state who take great interest in seeing students succeed. The members review applications and conduct interviews before giving me their recommendations. Members of the 2010 First District Service Academy Selection Board include: Kirstin Bangerter and Paula Ripple of Dodge City; Shirley Braxton and Mike Junk of Salina; Consuelo Sandoval of Garden City; Annie Fee and Chris Orwoll of Hutchinson; Tom Brown of McPherson; Ryan Newell of Marion; Ron Lucas of Goodland; Bekki Pribil of Pratt; Kay Schmidt of Milford; Rev. Delbert Stanton of Hays; and Ron Whitney, Steve Harmon and Jeff Devilbiss of Emporia. Thanks to the board members for their service and dedication to the next generation of military leaders. A special thanks goes to Karl Weissenbach and Linda Smith of the Dwight. D. Eisenhower Presidential Library for allowing us to use the library for this important day. [Click here](#) to view photos from the event.



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Hallmark CEO Honored with Human Relations Award

I joined Kansas City community leaders Sunday evening to honor Donald J. Hall, Jr. with the 2010 Henry W. Bloch Human Relations Award at the Jewish Community Relations Bureau|American Jewish Committee (JCRB|AJC) Human Relations Dinner. Donald Hall, Jr. is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Hallmark Cards, Inc. He was recognized this weekend for his commitment to justice, leadership and service to the community. Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, the Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, spoke at the dinner. I enjoyed visiting with many of those in attendance. Thanks to JCRB|AJC Executive Director Marvin Szneler for his hospitality.

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Celebrating the Life of Ross Beach

This week, I spoke to my colleagues in the House of Representatives about the life and achievements of Ross Beach. My friend Ross Beach passed away November 12th at the age of 92. Having known Ross personally for nearly 35 years, I learned a great deal from my friend and fellow Western Kansan. A pioneer in banking, radio and television, and oil and gas, Ross provided economic opportunities for many Kansans. His business success was overshadowed only by he and his wife's generosity.

Ross and Marianna Beach worked hard to ensure that education and the arts remained a priority for Kansans. They assisted with the formation of the Beach-Schmidt Performing Arts Center and the Sternberg Museum of Natural History in coordination with Fort Hays State University. The Mariana Kistler Beach Museum of Art sits on the campus of Kansas State University, where Robba and I serve on the Board of Visitors. The Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas serves Kansans with disabilities and their families to help them lead healthier, more productive lives. Ross's legacy of generosity will live on for generations to come. [Click here](#) to watch my tribute to Ross in the House of Representatives.

On Thursday, I joined Ross's family and friends for a remembrance service. It was a celebration of the life that was lived in service to others. The caring nature and generous soul of Ross

Beach lives on in his wife Marianna, his daughters Mary McDowell and husband Gary, Terry Edwards and husband R.A., and Jane Hipp and husband Steve as well as eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. My thanks to the Beach family and our mutual friend Ted Haggart, for including me in this memorial celebration.

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Keeping Kansas First: Beginning 14th Annual Listening Tour

My annual Listening Tour began on Friday with stops in Marshall, Washington, Clay and Geary counties. Every year since coming to Congress, I've held a town hall meeting in each of the counties I represent. These meetings give me the opportunity to visit with Kansans so that I can take their concerns to our nation's capital. Click [here](#) to see photos from the stops and some of the thoughts expressed by Kansans at the meetings.

I will continue my tour this week with stops in Barton and Ford Counties:

Tuesday, November 23
Barton County, Great Bend

Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Great Bend Front Door Community Center

Address: 1615 10th Street

Wednesday, November 24

Ford County Tour Stop, Dodge City

Time: 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

Location: Dodge City Civic Center, VIP Room

Address: 2110 First Street

[Click here](#) to view a map of the counties I have visited.

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Attending the Kansas Farm Bureau Annual Banquet

On Friday evening, I attended the annual Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) banquet, held in Manhattan. The banquet is part of the KFB annual meeting where KFB leaders from across the state come together to set the organization's policies and goals for the coming year. Thanks to KFB President Steve Baccus for inviting me to this year's annual meeting. [Click here](#) to see a photo from the evening.



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In the Office

Jeff Roskam of Wichita and Jon Erickson of Overland Park were in with the Kansas Alliance for Biorefining and Bioenergy (KABB) to inform me about KABB's progress in its center of innovation to help Kansas identify barriers and implement solutions in the bioenergy industry. Steve McNinch of Oakley stopped by my office this week on behalf of Western Plains Energy to discuss his facility's plans to power Western Plains Energy's ethanol plant.

Adrienne Burns of Emporia was in with the Society for Human Resource Management to discuss the importance of continuing education within our workforce. Dr. Fletcher Lamkin, President of Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) and Jeff Chapman of Salina were in to update me on the latest developments at KWU. Rich Hastings of Kansas City, President and CEO of Saint Luke's Health System, was in to visit about implementation of the health care reform law. Dr. Saeid Sajadi of Overland Park was in to talk about Iran.

Several representatives of BNIM were in to inform me of their efforts to design energy efficient and self sustaining buildings. In with the group were Woody Overton, Bob Berkebile, Maria Maffry and Steve McDowell of Kansas City. Curtis Sneden of Topeka was in with Payless Shoe Source to discuss the Affordable Footwear Act. Eric Hear and Pat Doran of Topeka were in representing FHL Bank Topeka. Amanda Faber of Hillsboro stopped by to discuss a research project she is conducting about carbon capture and storage programs. This project is part of the American Studies Program, a program run by the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities.

Several Kansans stopped by my office in Washington, D.C. and received tours of the U.S. Capitol building, including Robert Green, Cynthia Goth, Barabara Palen, Stephanie Draayer and Lynn Wacker of Cawker City; Kathy Gaston and Diane Porter of Glen Elder; and Scott and Jay Hohmann of McPherson. Ed Cross of Topeka also stopped by my office to visit.

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Contact Me

It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance. To send me an email, [click here](#) . You can also [click here](#) to contact me through one of my Kansas offices or my Washington, D.C., office.

Very truly yours,

Jerry